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Court Sentence Announced for Juveniles Causing Wildfire near St. George

St. George, Utah: The Fifth District Juvenile Court for Washington County handed down punishment to nine juveniles for their role in starting the 2006 Jarvis Fire. The Jarvis Fire started on June 25, 2006 on the east side of the Beaver Dam Mountains, burning over 50,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management, state, private, and Shivwits Indian Reservation lands. Fire suppression costs exceeded 1.5 million dollars.

The group of nine juveniles and one adult were consuming alcohol at an outdoor party when they started an illegal campfire. Sparks from the campfire ignited the wild fire. Washington County had implemented fire restrictions prohibiting campfires on May 26.

The Washington County Attorney's Office filed charges of reckless burning, causing a catastrophe, and closed fire season violations. Four of the juveniles were also charged with obstruction of justice.

Between February 21 and June 29 of this year, the juveniles appeared in court and admitted to the charges. On July 5, Judge Thomas M. Higbee sentenced the juveniles to 30 days detention, \$500 restitution, a 500 word essay, and between 225 to 275 hours of community service. Each juvenile will be serving between zero to 20 days in detention with the remaining days stayed.

The Bureau of Land Management will seek to recover fire suppression costs in civil court.

The same charges have been filed against the adult involved in this case, which has not been adjudicated yet.

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